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AUTHOR Hellweg, Susan A.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

A rhetorical analysis was conducted of the four broadcast political debates that led to San Diego Mayor Pete Wilson's victory in the 1982 California senatorial race. Specifically, the analysis covered one primary debate held in San Diego among five of the seven Republican contenders and the three bipartisan debates held in Fresno, San Francisco, and Los Angeles between Wilson and Governor Jerry Brown, his opponent. The verbal characteristics examined included unequivocal messages, ambiguous messages, and reasoning strategies. Results indicated that Wilson (1) made direct statements of policy in as few as 56% of his messages in one debate and in as many as 93% in another; (2) employed support and evidence in about 66% of his messages; (3) used figurative analogies, historical references, and factual illustrations frequently; (4) relied heavily on one-sided messages in the primary debate and the bipartisan San Francisco debate, but used both one-sided and two-sided messages equally in the other two bipartisan debates; and (5) divided himself equally in the use of dynamic speaking style and conversational speaking style in the primary debate, but consistently employed the dynamic style in the bipartisan debates. (FL)

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THE RISE OF PETE WILSON FROM MAYOR TO SENATOR:
A VERBAL ANALYSIS OF THE 1982 PRIMARY AND
BIPARTISAN SENATE CAMPAIGN DEBATES
IN CALIFORNIA

Susan A. Hellweg

Anthony F. Smith

Kevin L. Freiberg

Department of Speech Communication

San Diego State University

Western Forensic Association/Western Speech Communication Association Convention
Seattle Washington
February 1984

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to provide a rhetorical analysis of the 1982 California Senatorial debates, involving Mayor Pete Wilson, first as a primary contender against five Republican opponents, and second as a bipartisan contender against Governor Jerry Brown. The four broadcast debates involved were analyzed in terms of unequivocal messages, ambiguous messages, reasoning strategies, and miscellaneous other rhetorical characteristics. The results and implications are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Pete Wilson's campaign and eventual ascension to the junior senatorial seat in California in 1982 in replacement of S. I. Hayakawa may be described as having consisted of two phases: first, the Republican primary campaign contending against six other variously known Republicans; and, second, the general election campaign as the Republican contender against a widely recognized Democrat Jerry Brown.

For the primary campaign Wilson ran against six formidable Republicans: Congressman Barry Goldwater, Jr.; Maureen Reagan, a well-known radio personality and, of course, daughter of the President; Congressman Pete McCloskey; Ted Bruinsma, a corporate executive and former law school dean; Congressman Robert Dornan; and State Senator John Schmitz.

As part of the primary campaign, a single candidate debate was broadcast on May 24, 1982 from San Diego to expose candidate views to the public prior to the June 8 primary election.

During the bipartisan campaign three Brown-Wilson debates were broadcast: (a) on August 12, 1982, from Fresno; (b) on October 6, 1982, from San Francisco; and (c) on October 11, 1982, from Los Angeles. The general senatorial election followed on November 2, with Wilson emerging as the victor by a clear margin.

With Reagan in the Presidency for over a year, the Republican Mayor of San Diego carried the assets and liabilities of an Administration fighting high

interest rates and a struggling economy, high unemployment, and tensions abroad. Wilson, Mayor of San Diego for over a decade, brought to the campaign considerably less statewide exposure than his bipartisan opponent, despite an attempt in 1980 at the California Presidential Primary. The fact that he did not have wide exposure may have been to his advantage, since he could then create an image to fit the needs of the campaign, rather than being identified with past political troubles. He did at least carry the image of being a knowledgeable and competent leader of the State's third largest city.

As the Governor of the State for two administrations, Jerry Brown was identified with several incidents of political waffling, namely on the State's medfly crisis and on the Proposition 13 tax cut. Brown, in fact, had been labeled by the media as "Governor Moonbeam,"¹ in response to this waffling and as Lord of the Medflies by a Los Angeles Times cartoonist.² As Hunt, Hill, and Mason (1982) point out, Brown's portrayal in the media became more focused on political caricatures than on images of a steadfast political servant. While Brown carried greater past exposure than his Republican contender, it may have been to his disadvantage.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a rhetorical analysis of the four broadcast political debates which lead to Mayor Pete Wilson's victory in the 1982 California Senatorial race. More specifically, the analysis will encompass the one primary debate held in San Diego among five of the seven Republican contenders and the three bipartisan debates held in Fresno, San Francisco, and Los Angeles between Mayor Pete Wilson and Governor Jerry Brown. The verbal characteristics examined in the four debates include unequivocal messages, ambiguous messages, and reasoning strategies, the former

two on the basis of classifications utilized by Samovar (1962, 1965) in rhetorical studies of the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates.³ The three authors made independent judgments on each rhetorical characteristic from video and audio tapes of the debates so as to achieve a reasonable degree of inter-rater reliability on assessment of the candidates.

The Republican Primary Senatorial Debate

The only broadcast Republican primary debate was held on May 24, 1982, at San Diego City College. Five of the seven Republican contenders chose to participate in the ninety-minute event: Mayor Pete Wilson, Congressman Pete McCloskey, State Senator John Schmitz, Ted Bruinsma, and Maureen Reagan. Both Congressman Barry Goldwater, Jr., and Robert Dornan declined the invitation to take part in the encounter.

The ninety-minute debate featured the following three-part format: (a) In the initial segment, the candidates each were allowed to give a one-minute opening statement; (b) In the second segment, the panelists asked the five candidates a series of questions on a rotating basis, with the candidates being given one and a half minutes to respond to eight of the questions and one minute for the final query and with a follow-up question to one candidate per question of the panelist's choice; and (c) In the final segment, the candidates each were permitted to give a two-minute closing statement. No audience questions nor candidate cross-examination were featured in this debate.

A total of nine questions were posed to the five candidates, as well as eight follow-up questions to single candidates in the second segment. A total of 63 candidate messages were featured in the debate: Wilson, 14 (total time - 961 seconds, average of 68.64 seconds per message); Bruinsma, 12 (total time - 900 seconds, average of 75.00 seconds per message); McCloskey, 12 (total time - 1,058 seconds, average of 88.17 seconds per message); Reagan, 13 (total time - 855 seconds, average of 65.77 seconds per message); and Schmitz, 12 (total time - 856 seconds, average of 71.33 seconds per message). Wilson was the opening speaker for only one of the panelist questions, but functioned as single respondent for three of the eight follow-up questions.

George Mitrovich of the City Club of San Diego served as moderator for the debate. The panelists consisted of two print journalists and two broadcast journalists: Gloria Penner, KPBS, San Diego; William Endicott, Los Angeles Times; William Osborne, San Diego Tribune; and Rollin Post, KRON-TV, San Francisco.

No restrictions were placed upon the debate in terms of the issues that could be dealt with in the panelist questioning. Both foreign and domestic issues were incorporated in the questions directed at the candidates. Specifically, the nine initial questions and eight follow-up questions dealt with the following: jobs; nuclear arms negotiation; the ERA Amendment; Social Security; abortion; tax breaks for legislators; the Middle East; the Falkland Islands; and undocumented workers.

Unequivocal Messages. In nearly every one of Wilson's messages (93 percent), he made a direct statement of policy, as did all the other candidates, some to a lesser degree (Bruinsma, 92 percent; McCloskey, 83 percent; Reagan, 85 percent; and Schmitz, 75 percent). The San Diego Mayor provided

development and explanation in 79 percent of his messages, while Bruinsma did so in 92 percent of his messages and Schmitz did so in only 58 percent of his messages; McCloskey and Reagan were more consistent with Wilson in incorporating development and explanation in as much as 83 percent and 85 percent of their messages, respectively. Rhetorical questions were posed and answered in only three of the 63 candidate messages, one by Wilson, one by Bruinsma, and one by Schmitz. Redundancy was evidenced in only one candidate message during the debate, that emanating from McCloskey. Support and evidence were incorporated in 64 percent of Wilson's messages, while Bruinsma utilized them in as many as 83 percent of his messages and Schmitz did so in as few as 33 percent of his messages; Reagan employed support and evidence in 62 percent of her messages, while McCloskey did so in 50 percent of his messages. Only on four occasions did candidates restate their positions at the conclusion of their messages (Bruinsma, once; Reagan, twice; Schmitz, once).

Ambiguous Message. The San Diego Mayor talked about the position of his opponents in 43 percent of his messages, while Reagan did so in as few as 15 percent of her messages; Bruinsma and Schmitz did so in 50 percent of their messages, while McCloskey made such references in only 33 percent of his messages. Unfamiliar jargon appeared in only two candidate messages (one by Reagan and one by Schmitz). Lack of development and explanation was evidenced in as many as 21 percent of Wilson's messages and 33 percent of Schmitz's messages, while it was never evidenced in the other three candidates' messages. Ineffective transitions appeared in only one candidate message during the debate, that emanating from Schmitz. Emotional appeals were used relatively infrequently by Wilson (in 29 percent of his messages), while Schmitz utilized them in as many as 75 percent of his messages. The remaining candidates

employed emotional appeals with about the same regularity: Bruinsma and McCloskey in 42 percent of their messages; and Reagan in 39 percent of her messages. Loaded language and emotional proof were incorporated in 50 percent of the Wilson messages, while Schmitz did so in as many as 67 percent of his messages and McCloskey did not do so in any of his messages. Reagan employed loaded language and emotional proof in 46 percent of her messages, while Bruinsma did so in only 25 percent of his messages. None of the candidates left unanswered rhetorical questions in their messages nor inserted contradictions in their messages.

Reasoning Strategies. None of the candidates employed literal analogies in their messages. However, Schmitz utilized figurative analogies in as many as 67 percent of his messages, with as few as two in Wilson's messages and one in Bruinsma's and Reagan's messages. Wilson made historical references in 79 percent of his messages, with McCloskey and Bruinsma doing so in as many as 100 percent and 92 percent of their messages, respectively; Reagan utilized historical references in 69 percent of her messages and Schmitz employed them in 75 percent of his messages. The San Diego Mayor incorporated factual illustration in 57 percent of his messages, with Bruinsma doing so in as many as 67 percent of his messages and Reagan in as few as 23 percent of her messages; Schmitz utilized factual illustration in 50 percent of his messages, McCloskey in 33 percent of his messages. Hypothetical illustrations were employed by Wilson in only 14 percent of his messages, while generally speaking, the other candidates utilized them more frequently (McCloskey, 42 percent; Reagan, 39 percent; Bruinsma, 25 percent; Schmitz, eight percent). Syllogisms were only used in one candidate message, that emanating from Schmitz. Inductive reasoning was only employed by Wilson in two messages. Deductive reasoning

was also utilized very rarely by the candidates: in two Wilson messages, in one Bruinsma message, in one McCloskey message, and in one Reagan message.

Other Rhetorical Characteristics. A high percentage of all the candidate messages incorporated issue information: Wilson, 100 percent; Bruinsma, 83 percent; McCloskey, 83 percent; Reagan, 92 percent; and Schmitz, 83 percent. Image information was incorporated far less consistently in the candidate messages: Wilson, seven percent; Bruinsma, 42 percent; McCloskey, 25 percent; Reagan, 23 percent; and Schmitz, 58 percent. Due to the nature of the debate format, candidate initiation of topics was held relatively low: Wilson, 14 percent; Bruinsma, 25 percent; McCloskey, 25 percent; Reagan, 15 percent; and Schmitz, 17 percent. Opponent-initiated topics appeared in only one Wilson message. Panelist initiated topics were consistently highly evident in the candidate messages: Wilson, 86 percent; Reagan, 85 percent; and Schmitz, 75 percent.

Humor was contained in 50 percent of the Schmitz messages, while it appeared in only one McCloskey message and one Reagan message; Wilson and Bruinsma did not incorporate humor in any of their messages. Fear appeals were contained in only 14 percent of the Wilson messages, with their presence evidenced in as many as 42 percent of the Schmitz messages and in as few as eight percent of the Bruinsma messages; Reagan utilized fear appeals in 31 percent of her messages, McCloskey in 25 percent of his messages. One-sided messages were highly evident in the candidate presentations: Wilson, 79 percent; Bruinsma, 92 percent; McCloskey, 75 percent; Reagan, 85 percent; and Schmitz, 83 percent. Two-sided messages were not evident in the debate at any time. The candidates varied greatly in their use of a conversational versus dynamic speaking style: Wilson utilized both styles in 36 percent of his

messages; Bruinsma employed a conversational speaking style in 67 percent of his messages, a dynamic one in only 17 percent of his messages; McCloskey incorporated a conversational speaking style in 83 percent of his messages, but never utilized a dynamic one; Reagan infused both styles in 46 percent of her messages; and Schmitz, unlike his opponents, relied upon a conversational speaking style (in eight percent of his messages) far less frequently than a dynamic one (in 75 percent of his messages).

The format of the debate provided for a relatively formal presentation, although there was some levity evidenced. Because of the inflexible structure of the debate and the routine questioning, it was difficult to distinguish the Republican candidates, who were not only trying to stand apart from the others, but also aiming to solidify their party. Senator Schmitz probably stood apart, however, from the others more than any of the other contenders due to the lesser evidence of direct statements of policy, development and explanation, and support and evidence in his messages, his greater use of emotional appeals and loaded language/emotional proofs, his significantly greater use of figurative analogies, humor, and fear appeals, and his reliance on a dynamic rather than conversational speaking style.

While the San Diego debate served essentially as a candidate press conference where the contenders ran through their known positions, it did provide the public with an opportunity to compare the five present, as well as for the future Senator to present his views not only in front of a hometown audience, but also across the State.

The First Bipartisan Senatorial Debate

The first broadcast bipartisan debate of the 1982 California Senatorial campaign was held on August 12 at the Picadilly Inn in Fresno.

The two-hour debate between Wilson and Brown featured the following six-part format: (a) In the initial segment, the two candidates were allowed to give three-minute opening statements, then single rebuttals to each other's comments; (b) In the second segment, the candidates were given three minutes to respond to eight panelists questions⁴ (each candidate being asked four questions) and two minutes for a single rebuttal per opponent response; (c) In the third segment, the candidates were allowed to give closing statements, to finish up the first hour of the debate; (d) In the fourth segment, the candidates were given the opportunity to make opening statements, to initiate the proceedings of the second hour; (e) In the fifth segment, the candidates cross-examined one another, with allowances of one minute for each of the seven questions, three minutes for a response, and two minutes for a rebuttal; (f) In the final segment, each candidate was provided the opportunity to make a closing statement.

A total of 40 candidate messages were featured in the Fresno debate, 22 in the first hour where panelist questions were the primary feature and 18 in the second hour where candidate cross-examination was the primary feature. In total, Wilson and Brown each had the opportunity to convey 20 messages. Wilson conveyed his messages in a total of 2,757 seconds, his presentations averaging 137.85 seconds; Brown conveyed his messages in a total of 2,516 seconds, for an average of 125.80 seconds per message.

No topic restrictions were imposed upon the debate. A variety of issues were brought forth in the panelist questioning: taxes, Social Security, Proposition 8, the balanced budget amendment, economic sanctions as a diplomatic tool, school desegregation, and Mid-East policy. During the candidate cross-examination period, the following issues emerged in the questioning:

Social Security, deficit reduction plans, nuclear arms, and past political records.

Ed Hardy served as the moderator of the Fresno debate. Four panelists generated the questions in the first hour of the debate: Ray Kip, San Diego Union; Jim Boran, Fresno Bee; Doug Willis, Associated Press; and William Endicott, Los Angeles Times.

Unequivocal Messages. Brown made direct statements of policy in a higher percentage of his messages (90 percent) than his opponent (75 percent). Both Brown and Wilson maximized the use of development and explanation in their messages, with the former doing so in 100 percent of his presentations and the latter in 95 percent of his presentations. Rhetorical questions were posed and answered in only single messages from the two candidates. Redundancy was a feature in only 15 percent of the Brown messages and 10 percent of the Wilson messages. Both candidates incorporated support and evidence in 90 percent of their messages. Brown restated his position at the conclusion of a message in 10 percent of his presentations, Wilson in 15 percent of his presentations.

Ambiguous Messages. Wilson talked about the position of his opponent in a greater percentage of his messages (80 percent) than Brown did (65 percent). Wilson employed unfamiliar jargon in only one message; his opponent never utilized unfamiliar jargon in his messages. Ineffective transitions were evidenced in 25 percent of the Wilson messages, but not in any of the Brown messages. Emotional appeals were a feature in 80 percent of the Brown messages and 85 percent of the Wilson messages. Loaded language and emotional proof were evidenced in considerably more Wilson messages (90 percent) than in Brown messages (60 percent). Neither candidate failed to answer rhetorical questions in his messages. Contradictions were not evidenced in any of the messages.

Reasoning Strategies. Literal analogies were evidenced in five percent of the Brown messages and 25 percent of the Wilson messages; figurative analogies, on the other hand, were contained in 55 percent of the Brown messages and 30 percent of the Wilson messages. Historical references were used frequently by both candidates, by Brown in 85 percent of his messages and by Wilson in 95 percent of his messages. Likewise, factual illustrations were frequent features of the candidate messages, in 70 percent of the Brown messages and 85 percent of the Wilson messages. Hypothetical illustrations were evidenced in a far greater percentage of the Brown messages (50 percent) than in the Wilson messages (25 percent). Neither syllogisms nor inductive reasoning were utilized by the two candidates in the debate; deductive reasoning was employed in only one Wilson message.

Other Rhetorical Characteristics. A high percentage of the candidate information (Brown, 95 percent; Wilson, 100 percent) contained issue information. Image information was contained in 55 percent of the Brown messages and in 40 percent of the Wilson messages. Due to the nature of the debate format, considerably more candidate initiation of topics occurred in this debate (Brown, 50 percent of his messages; Wilson, 45 percent of his messages) than in the San Diego primary debate. Likewise, opponent-initiated topics were more frequently evidenced in this debate than the one in San Diego, with such topic initiation appearing in 50 percent of the Brown messages and in 45 percent of the Wilson messages. Finally, panelist initiated topics were found in only 20 percent of the Brown messages and 25 percent of the Wilson messages.

Humor was evidenced in few of the candidate messages: in five percent of the Brown messages and 10 percent of the Wilson messages. Fear appeals were employed quite frequently by both candidates; they appeared in 45 percent of

the Brown messages and in 35 percent of the Wilson messages. One-sided messages were evidenced in 45 percent of the Brown and the Wilson presentations, while two-sided messages were a feature of 55 percent of them. A dynamic speaking style (in contrast to a conversational speaking style) was employed by the candidates in all 40 messages in the debate.

The format of the debate definitely allowed for greater clash between the candidates than might have been evidenced without the cross-examination segment. In terms of differences between the candidates, it is apparent that Brown made more direct statements of policy than his opponent, talked less about the position of his opponent, made more effective transitions in his presentations, employed less loaded language and emotional proof, relied more heavily on figurative analogies and hypothetical illustrations to make his points, conveyed more image information, and utilized a greater number of fear appeals. In contrast, Wilson focused more on talking about his opponent, and relied on a greater number of literal analogies, historical references, and factual illustrations.

The Second Bipartisan Senatorial Debate

The second broadcast bipartisan debate of the 1982 California Senatorial campaign was held on October 6 at the Hilton Hotel in San Francisco.

The one-hour League of Women Voters sponsored-debate featured the following four-part format: (a) In the initial segment, the two candidates were allowed to present two and a half minute opening statements, then single rebuttals to each other's comments; (b) In the second segment, the candidates were posed six panelist questions, the first candidate getting the initial question in rotation, as well as a follow-up question, and the second candidate being given the opportunity for a rebuttal; (c) In the third segment, the

candidates were permitted to cross-examine one another through six questions (no rebuttals); and (d) the candidates were allowed to present three and a half minute closing statements.

This particular debate was totally limited to subjects dealing with foreign policy issues. A total of 30 candidate messages were conveyed in the debate. For his 15 messages, Brown consumed 1,291 seconds, for an average of 86.07 seconds per message; for his 15 messages, Wilson consumed 1,284 seconds, for an average of 85.60 seconds per message.

Specifically, the following issues emerged during the panelist questioning to the candidates: American-Soviet military relations, the nuclear freeze movement, Middle East policy, human rights policy, and open border policy. In the candidate cross-examination period, the following topics emerged: NATO, nuclear arms, the B-1 bomber, Resolution 435, American-Cuban relations, and military superiority.

Three journalists served as panelists for the debate: Larry Liebert, San Francisco Chronicle; Dale Lane, San Jose Mercury News; and Rollin Post, KRON-TV, San Francisco.

Unequivocal Messages. Both candidates infused direct statements in almost all of their messages (Brown, 87 percent; Wilson, 93 percent). Likewise, development and explanation was incorporated in nearly all candidate presentations (Brown, 100 percent; Wilson, 93 percent). No rhetorical questions were posed and answered in any of the candidate messages. Redundancy was provided in only one Brown message. Both candidates utilized support and evidence in 67 percent of their messages. Brown restated his position at the conclusion of one of his messages.

Ambiguous Messages. Wilson talked about the position of his opponent in considerably more of his messages (27 percent) than did his opponent (seven percent). Unfamiliar jargon was not evidenced in any of the candidate messages, nor were ineffective transitions. Use of emotional appeals was found in 53 percent of the Brown messages and 40 percent of the Wilson messages. Loaded language and emotional proof were evidenced in 53 percent of the Brown and Wilson messages. Unanswered rhetorical questions and contradictions were not isolated in any of the candidate messages.

Reasoning Strategies. Figurative analogies were employed by both candidates considerably more frequently than literal analogies, with Brown using literal ones in none of his messages and figurative ones in 33 percent of his messages and Wilson using the former type in seven percent of his messages and the latter type in 27 percent of his messages. Historical references were utilized by both candidates in 67 percent of their messages. Factual illustrations were employed by Wilson in a far greater percentage of his messages (47 percent) than by Brown in his messages (20 percent). Both candidates incorporated historical references in 13 percent of their messages. Syllogisms, inductive reasoning, and deductive reasoning were not contained in any candidate messages.

Other Rhetorical Characteristics. All of the 30 candidate messages in the debate contained issue information. Brown infused image information in seven percent of his messages; Wilson did so in 13 percent of his messages. Candidate-initiated topics were a feature in 13 percent of Brown's and Wilson's messages. Opponent-initiated topics appeared in 27 percent of Brown's messages and in 40 percent of Wilson's messages. Panelist-initiated topics were

evidenced in 60 percent of the Brown messages and 47 percent of Wilson's messages.

Humor was not apparent in any of the 30 candidate messages. Fear appeals were utilized by Brown in 33 percent of his messages and by Wilson in 13 percent of his messages. One-sided messages were a feature of 80 percent of the Brown presentations and 73 percent of the Wilson presentations, while two-sided messages appeared in only seven percent of the Brown presentations and 27 percent of the Wilson presentations. Both candidates relied upon a dynamic speaking style (in contrast to a conversational speaking style) in all their presentations.

Though only one hour in length, the debate served the purpose of crystallizing for comparison the candidate positions on foreign policy issues. The candidate cross-examination period, though brief, allowed for some clash between the contenders. In terms of differences in performance between the two candidates, it can be said that Wilson talked more about his opponent, used fewer emotional appeals than his Democratic adversary, relied more heavily on factual illustrations, utilized opponent-initiated topics to a greater degree and fewer panelist-initiated topics, employed fewer fear appeals, but did incorporate more two-sided messages in his presentations.

The Third Bipartisan Senatorial Debate

The third and final 1982 bipartisan senatorial debate was held on October 11 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles.

The one-hour League of Women Voters-sponsored debate featured the following four-part format (a duplicate of the one employed in the San Francisco encounter): (a) In the initial segment, the candidates were given the

opportunity to present two and a half minute opening statements, then single rebuttals to each other's comments; (b) In the second segment, the candidates responded to six main panelist questions, with one of the candidates on a rotating basis answering the initial question and a follow-up question and the other candidate providing a rebuttal; (c) In the third segment, the candidates cross-examined one another through seven questions (no rebuttals being permitted); and (d) In the fourth segment, the candidates were given the opportunity to present two and a half minute closing statements.

Restrictions were imposed upon the debate so as to limit the topics to domestic issues. Topics which emerged in the panelist question period were: tax policy, Proposition 8, balancing budgets, campaign advertising, federal policy on pesticides, and unemployment. Topics which emerged in the candidate cross-examination period were: the draft, handgun registration, undocumented workers, highway programs, Social Security, and past records of the candidates.

The debate contained 31 candidate messages, 16 for Wilson and 15 for Brown. Wilson conveyed his messages in 1,449 seconds, for an average of 90.56 seconds per message; Brown conveyed his messages in 1,221 seconds, for an average of 81.40 seconds per message.

Warren Olney, KABC-TV, Los Angeles, served as moderator for the debate. Three journalists served as the panelists: Saul Halpert, KNBC-TV, Los Angeles; Ginger Rutland, KRON-TV, San Francisco; and Doug Willis, Associated Press.

Unequivocal Messages. Brown made direct statements of policy in a significantly greater percentage of his messages (86 per-cent) than did Wilson (56 percent). Both candidates infused development and explanation in all their messages. Only one message from each candidate posed and answered any rhetorical questions. Redundancy was evidenced in two of the Brown messages.

Support and evidence were incorporated in 67 percent of the Brown messages and 69 percent of the Wilson messages. Both candidates restated their position at the conclusion of only one message.

Ambiguous Messages. Brown talked about his opponent in considerably more of his messages (73 percent) than did Wilson (56 percent). Neither unfamiliar jargon, ineffective transitions, unanswered rhetorical questions, nor contradictions were evidenced in any of the candidate messages. Emotional appeals were employed in a greater percentage of Brown messages (60 percent) than Wilson messages (44 percent). Loaded language and emotional proof were evidenced in 67 percent of the Brown messages and 75 percent of the Wilson messages.

Reasoning Strategies. Both candidates employed figurative analogies frequently in their messages (Brown, 40 percent; Wilson, 50 percent), while they utilized literal analogies rather infrequently, if at all, in their messages (Brown, seven percent; Wilson, zero percent). Historical references were incorporated in a high percentage of Brown and Wilson messages (73 percent and 75 percent, respectively). Wilson infused factual illustrations considerably more frequently in his messages (56 percent) than did Brown (27 percent). In contrast, Brown utilized hypothetical illustrations significantly more often in his messages (40 percent) than did Wilson (19 percent). Neither candidate employed syllogisms nor inductive reasoning in their messages; Wilson utilized deductive reasoning in only one message.

Other Rhetorical Characteristics. While Brown incorporated issue information in all of his messages, Wilson did so in only 75 percent of his messages. In contrast, Wilson infused image information in 31 percent of his messages, while Brown did so in 20 percent of his messages. Initiation of

topics split as follows between the Brown and Wilson messages: (a) candidate-initiated topics--Brown, 33 percent; Wilson, 31 percent; (b) opponent-initiated topics--Brown, 33 percent; Wilson, 31 percent; and (c) panelist-initiated topics--Brown, 40 percent; Wilson, 50 percent.

Humor was incorporated in only one Wilson message. No fear appeals were employed by either candidate. One-sided messages were utilized considerably more by Wilson (in 44 percent of his messages) than by Brown (in 20 percent of his messages). In contrast, two-sided messages were evidenced in 80 percent of the Brown presentations and in 56 percent of the Wilson presentations. Both candidates relied totally upon a dynamic speaking style (in contrast to a conversational speaking style).

Once again, the presence of a candidate cross-examination period, though brief, produced some clash between the opponents. This debate served not only as an effort to crystalize the candidate positions for the public, but also as an opportunity for a comparison of the contenders on domestic issues.

Candidate differences from a rhetorical standpoint appear as follows: Brown made more frequent use of direct policy statements in his messages, talked more about his opponent, used emotional appeals much more frequently, relied more on hypothetical illustrations, and employed a significantly higher number of two-sided messages than his Republican adversary. Wilson, on the other hand, used figurative analogies more frequently, as well as factual illustrations, conveyed more image information but less issue information, and relied more upon one-sided messages than his opponent.

Discussion

Obviously, the various format structures, questions posed, and opponent situations influenced the way in which Pete Wilson could get across his

positions, offer rebuttals, and attack contenders in the four debates described in this paper.

Clearly, the formats varied slightly among the debates, particularly between the primary debate and the three bipartisan debates. Speaker time was generally restricted in all four debates, as was speaker rotation. Topics were restricted only in the last two bipartisan debates to foreign policy and domestic policy issues, respectively. Frequently in these debates, the panelists posed multiple questions, making it difficult for the candidates to respond; sometimes questions were more tailored to the initial respondent, making it difficult for another candidate to center himself in the discussion. The four debates varied in length, the primary encounter being two hours in length, the Fresno bipartisan debate being two hours, and the San Francisco and Los Angeles bipartisan encounters being one hour.

The number of messages which Wilson conveyed in these four debates ranged from 14 in the primary debate to 20 in the Fresno debate. All of the debates featured both opening and closing statements; the three bipartisan debates allowed for candidate rebuttals. Follow-up questions were provided for in all but the Fresno debate. Candidate cross-examination was a feature in all three bipartisan encounters. By in large, the candidates in all four debates had equal opportunities for speaking time.

Wilson made direct statements of policy in as few as 56 percent of his messages in one debate (Los Angeles) and in as many as 93 percent (San Diego/San Francisco). His messages contained a very high degree of development and explanation (100 percent in the Los Angeles debate), with the lowest level being evidenced in the San Diego debate where these were incorporated in 79 percent of his messages. Support and evidence were generally employed in about

two-thirds of Wilson's debate messages, except for the Fresno debate, where they appeared in as many as 90 percent of his messages.

Talking about the positions of his opponents varied greatly in Wilson's appearances. In the primary debate, this occurred in 43 percent of his messages; in the Fresno debate, it was evidenced in as many as 80 percent of his messages, in San Francisco in as few as 27 percent of his messages, and in Los Angeles in 56 percent of his messages. This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that in the last three debates candidate cross-examination, as well as candidate rebuttals, was a part of the format. Likewise, the use of emotional appeals varied greatly in Wilson's four debate appearances: San Diego, 29 percent; Fresno, 85 percent; San Francisco, 40 percent; and Los Angeles, 44 percent. Loaded language and emotional proof varied in Wilson's presentations greatly also: San Diego, 50 percent; Fresno, 90 percent; San Francisco, 53 percent; and Los Angeles, 75 percent.

Wilson's use of figurative analogies varied from a high of 50 percent of his messages in the Los Angeles debate to a low of 14 percent of his messages in the San Diego debate. Historical references were consistently used in a high percentage of Wilson's messages: 79 percent, San Diego; 95 percent, Fresno; 67 percent, San Francisco; and 75 percent, Los Angeles. Likewise, factual illustrations were used very frequently in Wilson's debate appearances, ranging from incorporation in 47 percent of the messages in San Francisco to 85 percent in Fresno.

Issue information was present in the majority of Wilson's messages in the four debates; in fact, the only debate in which it was not present in every message was in Los Angeles, where it occurred in only 75 percent of the messages. Image information was given the greatest emphasis in the Fresno debate, where Wilson infused it in 40 percent of his messages.

Sources for topic initiation occurred basically as a function of the format involved in each of the four debates. Wilson's own initiation of topics was greatest by a large margin in the Fresno and Los Angeles debates. Opponent initiation of topic in Wilson's messages was relatively substantially evidenced in the three bipartisan debates, primarily due to the cross-examination segment of each debate.

Fear appeals emerged most frequently in Wilson's messages in the Fresno debate. While Wilson relied heavily on one-sided messages in the primary debate and the bipartisan San Francisco debate, he utilized both one-sided and two-sided messages more equally in the other two bipartisan debates. While Wilson divided himself equally in use of a dynamic speaking style and conversational speaking style in the primary debate, he consistently employed a dynamic speaking style in all three bipartisan encounters.

Each of the four debates analyzed here put into view Pete Wilson's potential as a Senator and made him a viable candidate in much the same way that Ronald Reagan's 1980 broadcast debates had done for him. Rather than advocating radical views, Wilson approached the debates with a traditional form of political presence, with the facts and figures to back up assertions and to contest allegations about past political actions or present stands on issues. Advocating free-enterprise conservatism, and taking pride in his fiscal prudence, innovation, and record as Mayor, Wilson sternly debated his way to a position that presently finds him in Washington.

Footnotes

¹This is a label which was coined by Chicago columnist Mike Royko (Hunt, Hill, and Mason, 1982).

²This is a label which was coined by cartoonist Paul Conrad of the Los Angeles Times (Hunt, Hill, and Mason, 1982).

³For unequivocal messages, Samovar noted the following verbal characteristics: direct statement of policy, development and explanation, rhetorical questions posed and answered, use of redundancy, use of support and evidence, and restatement of position at conclusion. For ambiguous messages, he noted the following verbal characteristics: talking about the position of an opponent or that of both candidates, use of unfamiliar jargon, lack of development and explanation, ineffective transitions, use of emotional appeals, use of loaded language and emotional proof, unanswered rhetorical questions, and contradictions in messages.

⁴Due to time limitations the candidates were held to one and a half minutes response time for the final question and rebuttal.

References

- Hunt, Gary T., Hill, Charlene Arnold, and Kay Mason, "California Statewide Debates: A Case Study on Communication of Voter Information," Paper presented at the Western Speech Communication Association Convention, Albuquerque, New Mexico, February 1983.
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